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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 1522  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 1601  
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 6803  
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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 JEDDAH 000586

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RIYADH, PLEASE PASS TO DHAHRAN; DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARP;  
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: CG GFOELLER RECEIVES PETITION FROM SAUDI WOMEN TO  
STOP ISRAELI BOMBARDMENT.

11. (U) SUMMARY. On July 18th, CG Gfoeller received an e-mailed draft petition from prominent Saudi women calling for a cessation of Israeli attacks in both Lebanon and Palestine. The petition stated that Israeli interference in Lebanon and Palestine has created regional instability and has deprived many Arabs of their basic human rights. Without specifically citing Hezbollah, the draft statement also rejected all forms of violence and asserted that the use of violence will never create the conditions for peace. The final petition, including 870 signatories, that was sent to western embassies and organizations the week of July 21st does not include the general denunciation of violence. END SUMMARY.

12. (U) FULL TRANSLATION OF DRAFT STATEMENT.

Women Call Upon World Leaders to Stop the War in Lebanon

Many Saudi women from all over the Kingdom call upon the leaders and decision makers of the world to stop the war in Lebanon and Palestine and to pressure Israel to stop attacking the two people and to give them back their rights. The attached are the names of women from all sectors, business, academic and social.

In the name of the mothers who have lost their kids because of the aggressive Israeli attacks on Lebanon and Palestine; that struck women, children and the infrastructure depriving them from the minimum requirements of life in countries that have been suffering from wars for many decades and generations...

"We as Saudi and Arab women affirm that we are peace loving people. People seeking to raise our kids in a way to be able to build not destroy humanity, we ask all human rights associations, the United Nations, the Security Council, and all the decision makers in the world to stop Israel from its terrorist attacks.

The wars that have taken place in the Arabic Region that have killed women and children are the main reason for the insecure feeling of our people. We affirm that we reject all forms of violence and we believe that violence does not produce anything but violence and that violence will not help the region whose instability will affect the entire world."  
END TRANSLATION OF DRAFT STATEMENT.



13. (U) FULL TRANSLATION OF FINAL STATEMENT.

A Call by Saudi Women to the Leaders of the World to stop the war on Lebanon and Palestine

A number of Saudi ladies who hail from different parts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, have come together to call upon world leaders and decision makers to stop the war in Lebanon and Palestine as well to pressure Israel to cease its assault upon those two countries and to give people back their rights. Ladies from various sectors of society responded to this call- their names appear below.

Calling out with the voice of bereaved mothers; mothers who have lost their children in the beastly Israeli attack on Lebanon and Palestine. A war so wide-ranging that it has caught women, children, elderly and the countries, infrastructure in its net and deprived them of the basic necessities of life in a country already riddled with scars of decades of long war.

"We as Saudi-Arab women declare that we are a peace-loving people trying to bring up children who will assist in the creation of and not in the destruction of humanity. Therefore, and in the name of all women, mothers, wives, sisters, widows and orphans we demand that world leaders and decision makers as well as the United Nations, the Security Council and human rights organizations act now to stop the war that Israel is waging against the Lebanese and Palestinian people and which has targeted innocent civilians, women, children the elderly, the disabled and the environment and to hold Israel accountable for its breaches of international law in its daily acts of state terror committed under the eyes of the world.

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The wars that have ignited and still igniting in the Arab region and whose first victims have been women and children are the principal reasons for the feelings of insecurity and instability in this part of the world as well as the sense that we are deprived of the right to a peaceful existence that many around the world enjoy. We call again upon an immediate ceasefire and hope and pray that our people will be able to look forward to a world where peace, freedom and security reign supreme." END TRANSLATION OF FINAL STATEMENT.

14. (U) SIGNATORIES.

The Jeddah based Saudi Business and Professional Women's Association (SBPWA) wrote the petition and coordinated the call for signatories. Signatories include business, academic, and social leaders throughout the Kingdom. To date, 870 women have signed the petition. Prominent Saudi women signatories include: Sameera Bitar, founder and president of the Saudi Business and Professional Women's Association; Fatin Bundagji, board member of the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce; Samar Fatani, a veteran Arab News journalist and wife of its editor in chief; and Nawal Al-Harbi, an educator.

15. (U) REACH.

The SBPWA extended their call for signatures beyond the KSA to the all of the GCC countries. The petition was placed on-line on several internet blogs, including saudielection.com and lebanonupdates.blogspot. There was significant regional press coverage of the petition with English articles running in both the Arab News and Khaleej Times on July 21 and July 23 respectively. The final statement was sent to many western embassies and organizations throughout the KSA, including the US Embassy.

16. (U) PROMINENT BUSINESSWOMAN.

Subsequent to the release of the final petition, CG Gfoeller met informally with a prominent businesswoman, who was a signatory to the petition, to discuss other matters. The conversation touched on a number of topics, but the petition



strangely never came up. Towards the end of their discussion, the CG broached the topic of the petition and asked the businesswoman directly if she had anything personal to add. The businesswomen quickly said that her participation was pro forma and that the CG should not take the statement too seriously or personally. She said she had to do it because there was "pressure to sign" the statement. She added that she was not pleased with the war in Lebanon primarily because she has had to postpone some of her business ventures in the region.

17. (U) COMMENT.

Prior to the release of the petition, the PAO was in touch with some of the drafters and recommended that they also explicitly condemn Hezbollah's provocation in their statement. In addition to not heeding the PAO's recommendation, the drafters also unfortunately cut the portion rejecting all violence in the region in the final version. This may explain the Saudi businesswoman's reticence on the topic in her discussion with the CG. However, it is a very welcome development that Saudi women are becoming increasingly emboldened in taking political stances and organizing themselves. One of the key female drafters has confirmed to the PDO that they did not seek SAG approval at any point in the process of writing or sending the petition to foreign organizations and embassies. Consulate-Jeddah intends to nurture Saudi women's active participation in foreign and domestic politics to the greatest extent possible, especially through the CG's well-developed contacts at the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce-Women's Section. END COMMENT.  
Gfoeller